

Sub C1 1. (Twice amended) A method of assisting users in selecting items from an electronic catalog of items, the catalog accessible to users of an online sales system that provides services for allowing users to purchase items from the catalog, the method comprising:

providing a database which contains information about a plurality of user communities, wherein different communities represent different subsets of users of the sales system;

B1 tracking online purchases of items from the sales system by the users to generate purchase history data, and storing the purchase history data in a computer memory;

processing at least the purchase history data to identify at least one item which, based on actions of both members and non-members of a selected community of said plurality of user communities, has become popular within the selected community relative to its popularity outside the selected community; and

electronically notifying users that the at least one item is popular within the selected community.

2. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein electronically notifying users comprises generating a Web page which includes a community-based most popular items list.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the most popular items list is a bestsellers list.

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein electronically notifying users comprises automatically generating and sending an email message to members of the selected community.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the email message contains contact information of at least one member of the community that has purchased an item described in the email message.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein processing the purchase history data to identify at least one item comprises identifying a set of characterizing purchases for the community.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the community is an implicit membership community.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the community is based on email addresses of users.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the community is an explicit membership community.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the community is derived from an electronic address book of a user.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the community is a composite community which comprises multiple other communities of the database.

12. (Amended) A system for assisting users of an online sales system in selecting items from an electronic catalog of items, the system comprising:

at least one database which contains purchase history data for users of the sales system, and which contains information about a plurality of user communities wherein different communities represent different subsets of users of the sales system; and

a computer process which analyzes at least the purchase history data to identify items that are popular within particular communities of the plurality of communities relative to their respective popularity levels among a general user population, and which notifies users of the sales system of the items that are popular within particular communities.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the process comprises a first process which generates a data store which contains bestselling items lists for at least some of the communities, and a second process which selects items from the table to display to users.

14. The system of Claim 12, further comprising a user interface which allows users to select and join at least some of the user communities.

15. The system of Claim 12, further comprising a user interface which allows a user to define a composite community that includes multiple communities of the database, and to initiate generation of a popular items list for the composite community.

16. The system of Claim 12, wherein at least some of the communities are implicit membership communities.

17. The system of Claim 12, wherein at least some of the communities are based on email addresses of users.

18. The system of Claim 12, wherein at least some of the communities are based on electronic address books of the users.

19. The system of Claim 12, wherein the process generates and displays community bestsellers lists for at least some of the communities.

20. The system of Claim 12, wherein the process compares a popularity of an item within a community to a popularity of the item among non-members of the community.

21. The system of Claim 12, wherein the process sends to the users notification emails that include descriptions of the items that are popular within particular communities.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein at least some of the notification emails include contact information of users that have purchased items described therein.

23. The system of Claim 21, wherein at least some of the notification emails specify a level of acceptance an item has attained within a particular community.

24. (Amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein the process identifies items that are popular within particular communities by at least identifying a set of items purchased by members of a community that distinguishes the community from a general user population.

25. The system of Claim 24, wherein the process uses a censored chi-square algorithm to identify the set of items.

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26. (Amended) A method of assisting users in selecting items from an electronic catalog of items, the catalog accessible to users of an online sales system that provides services for allowing users to purchase items from the catalog, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

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identifying a subset of users of the store that have email addresses that satisfy a particular criteria, wherein the subset comprises a plurality of users;

identifying at least one item that is popular among the subset of users, wherein the step of identifying comprises processing purchase history data of the subset of users and of users falling outside said subset; and

electronically notifying users of the online sales system of a popularity of the at least one item among the subset of users.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein identifying a subset of users comprises identifying all users of a selected email domain.

28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the selected email domain is an email domain of a selected company.

29. The method of Claim 26, wherein identifying a subset of users comprises identifying all users of a selected group of email domains.

30. The method of Claim 26, wherein electronically notifying comprises generating a Web page which includes a list of bestselling items among the subset of users.

31. The method of Claim 26, wherein electronically notifying comprises sending email notification messages to at least some of the users of the subset.

B4 32. (Twice amended) A method of recommending items from a catalog of items, comprising:

- identifying a subset of a general population of users;
- tracking at least one type of user activity that indicates user affinities for particular items of the catalog to generate activity history data;
- processing the activity history data of the general population of users, including the subset of users, to identify a set of items that distinguish the subset from the general population; and
- recommending items from the set of items to members of the subset.

33. (Twice amended) The method of Claim 32, wherein processing the activity history data comprises processing purchase history data, and the set of items consists essentially of items purchased by members of the subset.

34. The method of Claim 32, wherein tracking at least one type of user activity comprises tracking item viewing events.

B5 35. (Amended) The method of Claim 32, wherein processing the activity history data comprises applying a censored chi-square algorithm to the activity history data.

B6 36. (Amended) The method of Claim 32, wherein the subset consists of members of an implicit-membership community.

37. The method as in Claim 1, wherein processing the purchase history data comprises substantially excluding from consideration purchase history data falling outside a selected look-back period, so that calculated item popularity levels strongly reflect current interests of users.

38. The system as in Claim 12, wherein the computer process substantially excludes from consideration purchase history data falling outside a selected look-back period.

39. The method as in Claim 26, wherein identifying at least one item that is popular among the subset of users comprises comparing a popularity level of the item among the subset of users to a popularity level of the item among a general population of users.

40. The method as in Claim 26, wherein identifying at least one item that is popular among the subset of users comprises identifying a set of items that distinguish the subset from a general population of users.

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41. The method as in Claim 40, wherein identifying a set of items that distinguish the subset from a general population of users comprises applying a censored chi-square type algorithm to the purchase history data.

42. The method as in Claim 26, wherein identifying at least one item that is popular among the subset of users comprises at least one of (a) comparing a velocity of an item within the community to a velocity of the item within a general user population; and (b) comparing an acceleration of the item within the community to an acceleration of the item within a general population.

43. (Amended) A method of assisting users in selecting items from an electronic catalog of items, comprising:

identifying, among a population of users of the electronic catalog, a subset of users that, based on user shipping addresses, reside in a common geographic region;

monitoring actions of the subset of users, and of users falling outside the subset, to generate user activity history data reflective of user actions performed with respect to items in the electronic catalog;

processing the user activity history data to identify an item that is relatively popular among the subset of users in comparison to a popularity level of the item among the population of users; and

notifying at least one user that the item is popular within the geographic region.

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44. (Amended) The method as in Claim 43, wherein processing the user activity history data to identify an item that is relatively popular among the subset of users comprises at least one of (a) comparing a velocity of the item within the subset to a velocity of the item within a general user population; and (b) comparing an acceleration of the item within the subset to an acceleration of the item within a general user population.

45. (Amended) The method as in Claim 43, wherein processing the user activity history data to identify an item that is relatively popular among the subset of users comprises applying a censored chi-square type algorithm to the user activity history data.

46. The method as in Claim 43, wherein notifying at least one user that the item is popular within the geographic region comprises presenting to the user a list of items that are popular in the geographic region relative to popularity levels outside the region.

47. The method as in Claim 43, wherein the user actions performed with respect to items in the electronic catalog comprise item purchases.

48. The method as in Claim 43, wherein the user actions performed with respect to items in the electronic catalog comprise item viewing events.

49. The method as in Claim 43, wherein the geographic region corresponds to a particular city.

B8 *par 51* 50. (Amended) The method as in Claim 43, wherein processing the user activity history data comprises applying a time window to the user activity history data such that popularity of the item is measured substantially from a most recent set of the user activity history data.

B9 *par 51* 51. (New) A computer-implemented method of assisting users in selecting items from an electronic catalog of items, the method comprising:

storing email addresses of users of the electronic catalog;

for each of a plurality of organizations, identifying a respective group of said users who are deemed to be affiliated with the respective organization by virtue of a domain name of the respective organization occurring within an email address of each such user, to thereby identify a plurality of organization-specific groups of users;

tracking at least one type of user activity that indicates user affinities for particular items in the electronic catalog to generate activity history data for the users;

for each organization-specific group of users, analyzing the activity history data to generate a list of items within the electronic catalog that are popular within the organization-specific group relative to respective item popularity levels among a general population of the users, to thereby generate a plurality of organization-specific popular items lists; and

exposing the organization-specific popular items lists to the users of the electronic catalog in association with the organizations to which such popular items lists correspond, to allow users to identify items that are popular within specific organizations.

52. (New) The method as in Claim 51, wherein exposing the organization-specific popular items lists to the users comprises providing to a target user a personalized web page that displays organization-specific popular items lists of organizations with which the target user is affiliated.